

Jan: 8.

A Second

LETTER

From à Clergy Man in

N O R F O L K

T O

His Parishioners.

DIRECTING

Their Behaviour

I N

SICKNESS,

A N D

Their Preparation for Death.

By the Author of the First Letter.

L O N D O N :

Printed for *D. Midwinter*, and *T. Leigh*,
at the *Rose and Crown* in *St. Paul's*
Church-Yard. 1704.

1722
LETTER

FROM A
MORFOLK

TO

His Excellency

DIRECTING

THEIR



SICKNESS

AND

THEIR RECOVERY

By the Author of the First Edition

JOHN DOWD

Printed for D. Widdowes, and T. Lipp

and C. Widdowes, in the Strand

near the Church-yard

1722

My Dear Brethren!

HAVING given you some short Directions for your Behaviour towards God, your Governours and your Neighbours, your Selves and your Families, which I design'd for an help to those of you that cannot bear the charge of buying Books, and whose worldly Employments will not allow them much time to spend in Reading: I am willing, for your farther assistance, and the more successful discharge of my Ministry among you, to add to them a few other Instructions; in order,

I. To your general preparation for Afflictions, Sickness and Death.

II. For your particular Behaviour in time of your Sickness.

III. Your conduct after it in case of recovery.

IV. A perfecting what is behind of your Repentance.

First what I shall offer you by way of a general preparation I shall reduce to these Heads.

1. A general consideration of the uncertainty of your Condition, and the reasonableness of expecting a Change when you are in Health and Prosperity.

2. A Care to order your worldly Affairs with this prospect.

3. A sincere and timely Repentance.

I. I recommend to you a general consideration of the uncertainty of your condition, and the reasonableness of expecting a Change when you are in Health and Prosperity. In order to this let me put you in mind that our constitutions are liable to alterations and changes from a great variety of contingences; and that you are not to look on this World as the place of your abode; your Enjoyments here are fleeting and inconstant, and as long as you cannot

live free from Sins, Follies and Mistakes it is best for you that they are so: A constant state of Health, and a continued Scene of Prosperity requires more Virtue and Prudence in order to a due management thereof than most People can pretend to in this World; and therefore a general prospect of a change that may soon happen to you, when well manag'd will prove of great advantage, being proper to check the insolence of your carnal Appetites, to mortifie your evil affections, to put bounds to pride, covetousness, lust and anger, that otherwise would be too apt to gain a great and uncontrollable power over you, tempt you to presumption and all the sad consequences of it. It will also make any Evils less afflictive when they come, because less surprising; your minds will be arm'd against such as you daily expect, and you will bear them the better, if God pleases to send them. Think therefore on this in the best and most healthy part of your life; when you have power and opportunity to deliberate, and do not leave it to the very surprising minutes of Sicknes or Calamitys; your care for a deliverance from which, may be apt to Stifle your Thoughts, of your greatest concern, or by bringing them too suddenly on you may increase the distemper and give it too much advantage. There is so close an Union between Soul and Body that they must bear a common share in what happens to either; when the mind is burthen'd with grief, or surpris'd by any passion of joy, sorrow, fear or anger, they have an immediate Influence on the Body, which is express'd by it's various postures and motions as it is affected: and when the Body is indisposed the Soul bears part with it, and expresses her concern by casting about for proper methods of Ease and relief,

And considering how surprising many distempers are, how little warning they give, and how many times People are in a very few Minutes depriv'd of the use of their Reason, and not capable so much as to joyn in Pray'r. or any act of Religion, surely

you

you are not as good as dead, and should be so

evil

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you must esteem it most safe and prudent to make a timely preparation for your change, while you are in capacity to do it, and have time by the forelock. This will neither hasten Sickness or Death, but may in all probability be a means to preserve Life and Health, by teaching you to keep your Bodys in temperance and your Minds free from passions. You will by this means, become better acquainted with your selves, lay up in store a good stock of Humility, Meekness, Patience, Self-denial and Resignation to the Divine Will against the time you will most stand in need of them. Thus daily replenishing your stock of Oyl, and keeping your Lamps trim'd and adorn'd with the Divine Graces and Virtues of your Holy Religion, you will by the Blessing and Assistance of God be ready with the wise Virgins to meet the Bridgroom of your Souls: With the industrious Servant, in the Parable, you will be enabled with comfort to give an account to your Heavenly Master of those Talents he has committed to your care and management.

He that is to embark for a great Voyage will take care according to his abilities to provide every thing that is Necessary and proper for him, will furnish himself with all Conveniencies and Endeavour to get himself as well recommended as he can, that so when he has pass'd the Difficultys and Hazards of the Sea and Winds, he may arrive at his desir'd Port with a comfortable prospect. We are all of us on our way to another World, are here but Strangers, Probationers for Eternity, so that you ought while you have time and opportunity to serve God, to do all the Good you can for your fellow Creatures, and carefully to govern your selves. Let Devotion and Piety towards God, Justice and Charity towards your Neighbours; Temperance, Chastity, Meekness and Moderation in the government of your Appetites, and Affections be your daily care.

And let me recommend to you a Cheerful innocent freedom of Temper in the Management of
your

your selves and affairs; they disparage the Christian Religion, that think it should make People Sowre and Morose. The Yoke of Christ is Easy, and his Burthen Light. You have no restraints on you but Shuning what will hurt you, nor are you enjoy'd any thing but what really Conduces to your Substantial Happiness. All the ways of Piety are Pleasure, and her Paths lead to a well Grounded Peace. It must be from a wrong Apprehension of the Excellencys and Perfections of the Divine Being, that any one can pretend to charge him with the Imposing hardships or severe tasks on his Creatures. He has fram'd his Laws agreeable to these rational Facultys he has endow'd you withal, and interwoven your own Interest and Happiness with them. Inso-much that you cannot be Disobedient without offering some Violence to your own Nature and foolishly forsaking the most proper way of Promoting your own Felicity. And the Imperfection of your Performances is in some measure aton'd for by your readiness to do what you can, and that Cheerfulness of mind will help you still to do it. 2. Cor. 8. 12. St. Paul's assertion is true of all Christian Dutys as well as of that of Charity. *For if there be first a willing mind it is acceptable according to that a Man hath. c. 9. v. 7. for as God loves a cheerful giver* so does he like the same temper of mind in all Christians performances. Your serious Applications to the Consideration of these things you will find the best and most Comfortable preparation for any change and alteration of your Condition.

2. And it will in the Second place direct you to a prudent care in ordering your Worldly Affairs, and teach you not to Court the World too earnestly, or make too much hast to be Rich lest you fall into divers Temptations. In any strait do not entertain the least diffidence of Divine Providence, for you may be assur'd as God knows what is best for you, so in his infinite Goodness and Wisdom (if with Patience and Submission you wait the Issue) you may find it better than you Expected, how ever much better than you

can

can pretend to Deserve. On the other Hand live not beyond your income, or Spend what fairly ought to be left to Posterity; but take care to make an honest Provision for your Families and dependants, in such measure as may enable you to bear those Losses and Casualties your fortune in the World is liable to, and to be helpful to others. In order to which it will be Advisable to keep your accounts clear, and always a *Will* by you, made on due deliberation, and with the best Assistance you can get; so as those to whom you design Justice and Friendship may have the benefit of it without Vexatious and Chargeable Disputes. In the time of sickness a Man has Business enough to intend the Dutys of Religion proper under those Circumstances, and to observe the Methods prescribed him for the recovery of his Health, without being clog'd with the perplexing thoughts of the disposal of his Fortune, a trouble that when it is not prevented is often increased at such a time, by the different expectations of several Relations and Dependants, all whom it will be hard to please, and the difficulty it gives you may be prejudicial both to Body and Soul, for this reason too you may think it prudent to keep your Will secret.

When you are making your Will remember the Poor as far as your Abilities and Circumstances will fairly permit; and if God has Bless'd you with a plentiful Fortune, think of some way that may be most proper to express your thankfulness by contributing to some publick Good. What ever you give be it more or less, so order it that it may not be squandered away in Riot and Excess. There are two things much wanting among us; the one is a Reward and Encouragement for Physicians to take care of poor Sick People in their Neighbourhood, many strong Labouring Men dying for want of a little help, who might at a small charge have been recovered, and lived to bring up their Families. The other is a competent settlement in Country Parishes

ness for the Instruction of poor Peoples Children in Reading and Writing: in Towns that are small and contiguous one Master might serve for two or three. What a comfort would it be to their Parents to have their Children Read the Holy Scriptures to them? which would awaken them to a Sense of their Duty, the frequent hearing the Divine Laws would lay a great restraint on them against Sin, and season the tender years of Children with good Thoughts and Religious Principles, and prevent in a great measure the early growth of wickedness. How will People reverence the Memory of such, and bless God for raising them up to be happy instruments of their spiritual benefit and comfort. This would tend to the Honour of God, and the flourishing state of the reformed Religion. I hope you are above the mean fancy (which yet some People that we meet with entertain) that death must immediately follow the making their Wills.

These Rules with what you may your selves observe in reading the Holy Scriptures, and hearing Religious Discourses, will be of use to you in this great Concern. Yet to render your state the more safe and easy for the future, it's absolutely necessary that you look back, into the past Actions of your Life and examine wherein you have done amiss, and this leads me,

3. To mind you in the Third Place, of the Prudence and safety of a sincere and early Repentance. That we are all Sinners, and stand in need of God's Mercy and Pardon, is the acknowledgment of all Christians; but as some are frighted with the difficulties of the Task, so others have such low and mean thoughts of it, as if it were to be acceptably done at any time, and therefore leave it to the last periods of their Lives. Faith and Repentance are the conditions of the Gospel Covenant, the truth of the one, is to be judg'd by the sincerity of the other. If you heartily believe all that God has done for you, and what he has promis'd or threatned according to your be-

Behaviour, and if you Consider what Miseries your sins Expose you to, and what Mercys they deprive you of, and take any just Measures of your Duty and Interest, and examine your behaviour by those Laws and Rules, you have given you to Govern and Direct your selves by; you must be convinc'd of the necessity of your Repentance: and when you are so, the next thing you are to consider, is how you shall render it acceptable to God, and really beneficial to your selves. In order to which it must be sincere, for no Service is acceptable to the searcher of hearts without integrity, and it is in vain for Men to think to illude or impose on him who knoweth all things. Repentance is all that whole practice which is the intire Duty of a Christian after he has been overtaken in a fault, it includes a renouncing of all Evil, and requires the practice of all Christian Vertues, and therefore we are exhorted to it in the Scriptures by those expressions of ceasing to do Evil, and learning to do well. When Christ comes to Judgment *Rom. 2. 6.* St. Paul acquaints us that he will render to every Man according to his Works. The main design of the Scripture is to make known to us the Laws of God and the terms of his gracious Covenant, and to Direct, Exhort and Encourage us to live in all Piety and Devotion towards God by obeying in Sincerity of heart all his Laws, depending on his gracious Providence, resigning our Wills and Affections to his disposal, preserving our selves in Purity and Temperance, in Justice and Charity, doing the thing that is right; keeping Peace and shewing Mercy towards all Men, *St. J4. 1. 26, 27.* This is that pure and undefiled Religion before God and the Father, which will lead us Charitably to compassionate the needy and miserable and keep us unspotted from all the filthiness, and disobedience of a corrupt World. And this being the main business of your lives, and on which depends your future happiness or Misery; I hope you will consider the danger of deferring so great and necessary a Duty to a time that is

out of your power to command as all future time is. The only time that you are certain of is the present; it must be therefore folly and madness to let it slip and leave the great work to such an uncertainty as will render it very doubtful whether ever you shall do it or no. Very applicable is *Solomons* advice on this account, *Eccles. 9. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth thee to do, do it with thy might, for there is no Word, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave whither thou goest.* The other State of Life is designed for a rest from your Labours, and an eternal Reward for those who dye in the Lord.

If a Man that was loaded with great Debts and expected each day to be hurried to a Jayle shou'd receive a kind assurance from his Creditors, that upon his submission and faithful promises of his future care and prudent management he should not only be discharg'd from his Debts, but be put into a comfortable and prosperous way of living, and be preserved for the future from all danger of Want, or any other Distress: Do you think such a Person would defer the embracing such kind offers for Years or Days? Or if he did would he not be look'd upon as a very foolish Person, and such a one as justly deserved to be rank'd in the number of Madmen? You may apply this to your Spiritual concern, only reflect on the vast disproportion there is between Temporal and Eternal things; which if you do seriously, methinks you should be awakened to a due Care and Diligence in order to make your Calling and Election sure. You will never be at peace with your selves till you have seriously endeavour'd to reconcile your selves to God, and by your Repentance and renewed Holiness gain'd a comfortable prospect of Pardon thro' the all-prevailing merits of our Saviour, whose great design in suffering an ignominious death on the Cross, was to purchase the forgiveness of Sins and ascertain the Salvation of all Faithful and truly Penitent Christians. In order to secure this great end, carefully lay hold on all op-

portunities that the good Providence of God shall lay before you towards the furtherance of it. It may be useful to you in the time of health to look into and consider seriously the office our Church has prescribed to be used at the Visitation of the Sick, and deliberately to Read over those Pathetick exhortations, which may have a good influence on the conduct of your lives, and make you better acquainted with it against the time that you shall have more particular occasion to have recourse to it, and this brings me,

II. In the Second place to give you some short directions as to your behaviour in the time of Sicknels. In the time of Health I am willing to think you have made a general preparation by living in the fear of God, and due obedience to his righteous Laws, if you have not, your work will be the greater and more difficult. As soon as you find your self ill, if any of your worldly affairs seem to you to be out of order, settle them presently as well as you can to your own content, and then lay aside all thoughts of them. Look on your Sicknels as a visitation coming from the hand of God, and receive it with humility, Thankfulness and Resignation; and enquire into your own Soul for what ends and purposes it may be sent you, and endeavour under it to answer all the gracious designs of your Heavenly Father, who in all the variety of his dispensations still intends the good of his Creatures, and thro' his unerring Wisdom knows what is best for them. You cannot chuse so well for your selves as God does who foresees all future events and will order what is properest for you: and your Humility and Piety will be ever best shewn by thinking so. In your reflection and enquiry with your selves carefully shun all temptations that may tend to Presumption or Despair; apply your selves timely to the assistance of your Spiritual Guide, do not (as is too usual) ask his help the last; when your Physician and Friends despair of your recovery. Can you think it reasonable to lay aside the care of your Soul

till 'tis just taking leave of the Body? And is not the direction of a Wise and good Minister matter of the greatest comfort and satisfaction, while you have power and opportunity to attend his Admonitions and Instructions? Be free with him for your own Comfort and Information, and mistrust not his Integrity. I dare say you will not have offer'd to you any of the Artifices and Politick Devices that the Church of *Rome* uses in Auricular Confession to extort Secrets from those of her Communion. Our Church only modestly exhorts in case of any guilt or grief that burthens your Conscience, to make Confession to your Spiritual Guide; from whose prudent Conduct you may expect proper and Comfortable Directions: And this only in way of advice, in which your own Conscience is your director. And it is advisable in such exigences not to stifle her dictates, but to unburthen your mind that you may have suitable Help, and Comfort.

Apply your thoughts seriously to every particular of the exhortations, and enquire into your own Soul, for the Correction of what sins this merciful Visitation may be design'd, for which let your Repentance be proportionable, and your Sorrow suitable to the Nature, Degrees and Repetition of them. Let your Resolutions and Purposes of amendment (if God shall be pleas'd in mercy to restore your health) be grounded on certain principles of Thankfulness, Obedience, and Hopes of future Happiness thro' the merits and mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At the repetition of the several Articles of the Creed, examine the stedfastness of your Faith in them, weigh what each of them imports as to your Duty and Expectations, make an humble and comfortable application of them to your own Soul, and then you will be led to admire the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God; and to adore the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for their miraculous Co-operation in the gracious works of your Creation, Redemption and Sanctification,

Recollect seriously whether you have wrong'd any one in their Persons, Reputations, or Rights; and endeavour immediately to make them Satisfaction and Restitution: And desire their Pardon and Reconciliation in such a manner as is agreeable to the directions of the Gospel. Freely forgive and reconcile your selves to those that have wrong'd, injur'd, disoblig'd or disobey'd you, and forgive them with the same sincerity as you expect forgiveness in the other world: for without so doing you can never be assur'd of Gods pardon of your own sins. And sure that must be a very dangerous swelling of Spirit that tempts you to the hazard of your own eternal Salvation, and deprives your surviving Friends of all comfortable hopes of your sincerity in all the other instances of your preparations for your change. Can any one that has any due sense of himself or his Christian Duty be so vain as to think it possible for the offences of any Man against him, to bear any proportion to the offences that he has committed against the Almighty, and has not God made the forgiving others an indispensable condition of obtaining his forgiveness? You must entertain a very wrong Notion of the Almighty to think he will alter his Laws and Government to gratifie the Pride, vain Passions and corrupt Affections of his Creature, or else your uncharitableness must make your passage to an other world void of all true Comfort. To enforce my advice in this, Read over seriously the Parable in the 18th of St Matthew's Gospel, beginning at the 23. v. Consider the conclusion at the last v. and then the danger your uncharitableness exposes you to.

At the receiving the Absolution in an Holy admiration of the goodness of God to Penitent Sinners, humbly pray that it may be seal'd and confirm'd to your own Soul: For the efficacy depends on the soundness of your Faith, and the sincerity of your Repentance, and if they are such as recommend you to the divine favour according to the Gospel Covenant, you may be assur'd that it will be ratified in Heav'n.

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Request your Minister to put you into a suitable preparation for receiving the Holy Sacrament, and desire to partake of it as soon as he thinks fit. In your condition you stand in need of the best support of your Christian Faith, and the highest encouragements of Divine Grace, and the strongest foundation of your hope; which are all included in this Ordinance, it being the great Pledge and Seal of your pardon and reconciliation to God, and the utmost assurance you can have on earth (on your due preparation) of the Divine acceptance. And if your sickness is long, and your recovery dubious, desire a frequent repetition of it, that you may often taste and perceive how good and gracious our Lord is to all humble penitent Sinners. In the time of your sickness let the 51. the 71 *Psalms*, and our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount beginning at the 5th. and ending at the 7th of the Gospel written by St. *Matthew* be often Read to you, or at least in distances of time as you can best bear and intend it.

And since God has mercifully afforded you means for the recovery of your Health, apply your selves timely to the most proper ways you can have; and harbor not overcareful thoughts as to the event, but leave it to the disposal of Providence imploring a Blessing on what you take. Suffer not your Spirits to a mistrust of your Physicians Skill, or sink under that mistaken notion (which too commonly prevails) that every Mans particular time is unalterably appointed by the eternal decrees of God.

Whether thro' ignorance or a sparing humour we find it difficult to perswade many People that are of Ability to have timely recourse to those means God has allowed them, and does require they should use. Let me therefore desire you early to apply your selves to all safe and proper methods for the recovery of your Health. Call in the Physician to your help, and carefully observe his prescriptions as the Son of *Sirach* advises, *Ecclesiast.* 38. make Choice of such an one whose abilitys and experience has recommended him

to the general esteem of the Neighbourhood; and by no means venture your constitution into the hands of bold and ignorant pretenders to that Noble Science, to be Master of which to any useful purposes requires much Labour, Industry, Learning and Experience.

Neither suffer a dejection of your Spirits, on the opinion which too many have, that the time of your life is so unalterably fix'd, that do what you can, you can neither live longer or die sooner. The chief authority for which among common People, is grounded, on a misunderstanding of that passage in the 14. ch. Job. v. 5. *his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds which he cannot pass.* Which place must be understood in General as to the Death of all Men, who are appointed to die; Immortality not being design'd for this State. There is a great difference between Gods foreknowledge and his absolutely decreeing any thing, the Days and Years of Mans life in respect of Gods fore Knowledge are determinately seen, but from thence it does not necessarily follow, that the thing it self, the particular time of Mans life, is necessarily determin'd it being in it self variable; but only that God who cannot Possibly be deceiv'd, seeing all things at one glance, upon what immediate Cause soever they depend, does certainly see the Effect.

Natural and Moral Causes, as a well fram'd Constitution, Wholsom Diet, good Air and Water, Continence, Temperance and Freedom from Passions have a great Efficacy in preserving Human Life. And as such are seen by God, who gave them that tendency; yet so as he can put a stop to those natural and Moral causes, can Inhibit them as he thinks best in his infinite Wisdom, and according to the measures of his Justice, Mercy, and Goodness. God may in Mercy shorten the Life of the Righteous to take him away from the evil to come as is plain in the Case of Good *Josiah*. Or his Justice may cut of the Wick-

ed, when both of them according to the Strength of Nature, and the common course thereof might have lived longer. Nor can we suppose *Job*, to intend the Establishment of this Opinion by this place of Scripture, because he wou'd then seem to Contradict himself. For he says. *ch. 21. v. 19. 20. 2. God layeth up his iniquity for his Children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know it, his Eyes shall see his destruction, and shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty. For what Pleasure hath he in his House after him, when the number of his months cut off in the midst.*

And we find in a great many places of Scripture, God promises length of days to good Men, and threatens to shorten the Life of the Wicked. Thus in the fifth Commandment, length of days is promis'd to the honouring Parents, and the same is made in more general terms to those who obey the Statutes and Laws of God, *Deut. 4. 40.* the case of *Hezekiah* is a plain proof of this, *Isa. 38. v. 2.* the Prophet brings a sorrowful Message from God, *thus saith the Lord set thine House in order, for thou shalt Die and not Live.* Upon this the good King turn'd his Face unto the wall, and Pray'd unto the Lord, wept, mourn'd and humbled himself, on which the Prophet was sent on a kind Message to him *v. 5. go and say to Hezekiah thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy Father. I have hear'd thy Prayers, and have seen thy tears, behold I will add unto thy days fifteen Years.* For your further conviction I refer you to these several Texts of Scripture *Deut. 5. 16. 33. 8. 1. Kin. 3. 14. Ps. 34. 12. 13. 14. Ps. 51. 16. the 102. 24. and 55. Pro. 3. 16. Jer. 21. 8. 9. St. Math. 6. 33. 1. Pet. 3. 10. 1. 1.* from whence you may infer that Men may shorten or prolong their days in a great measure by their own conduct behaviour, and the ill or prudent Management and Government of their Passions and Affections; and that God has not absolutely and unconditionally decreed the fatal period of every Mans Life, because he has Conditionally promis'd to prolong
Mens

Mens Lives, or threatened to shorten them according to their behaviour. Now there can be no place for conditional promises where an absolute decree is pass'd: a Man cannot be said to be cut off in the midst of his Days, if he lives as long as the Almighty decrees he shall live, for if the period of every particular Mans Life be determin'd by God, none are his Days but what he has decreed for him.

I hope on a serious consideration of this, those of you that may have been carried away by a wrong notion in this point will be brought off from it, and be led to entertain more honourable thoughts of God, and more comfortable ones of your own condition; and so prudently betake your selves to those methods that are most proper for the health and welfare both of Soul and Body. I shall therefore close this head with the Son of Sirah's advice *Ecclus 18, 19.* *Use Physick or ever thou be sick, before Judgement examine thy self, and in the day of Visitation thou shalt find Mercy. Humble thy self before thou be sick, and in the time of sins shew repentance. Let nothings binder thee to pay thy Vows in due time; and defer not until Death to be justified.* And so I pass in the Third place to direct your conduct in case of Recovery.

III. If it please God to raise you from the Bed of Sickness, and Restore your Health, I wou'd desire you to consider how you ought to express your Thankfulness. Now that the Almighty has taken off his afflicting Rod and has heal'd your broken Bones, and made your Soul joyful; how ought you to admire the Divine goodness and to praise him for this undeserv'd favour towards you? As soon as you can safely enter into his Courts, return him your Humble thanks there; and upon the first opportunity receive the Cup of Salvation and call with thankfulness on the name of the Lord: That being the great ordinance of thanksgiving for all the unspeakable Mercys our good God does vouchsafe us out of his boundless Compassion and for the sake and Merits of

our Crucified Saviour, How fresh and exalted ought your gratitude to be that you are still on this side the Grave to praise your good God in the Land of the Living? how careful ought you to be of all those serious vows, and resolutions which on your reflexion and Examination of your Soul you have had just occasion to make in the time of your Sickness, to imprint them firmly on your minds? and on the return of any Temptations to arm your selves with the consideration of your having solemnly resolv'd never more to walk in those evil ways that lead to Destruction. Thus endeavour to keep your selves stedfast in your Obedience to the Holy Laws of your God, and never entertain any thing that shall separate you from his love: But labour to improve daily in all vertue and Godliness of living, that you may perfect what is behind of your Repentance.

This is my fourth and last advice, and you will find it to be the best preparation for your next or last Sickness. While your Health lasts, have recourse to those good thoughts that in time of Sickness you have treasur'd up; recollect all the sober and good instructions you have any where met with, by Reading, Hearing, Meditation or Conversation. And embrace all seasonable Opportunities of instilling them into the Minds of those about you, your Children, Friends and Dependants. Shew them both how necessary and comfortable an early Piety is, how void of all real Satisfaction the Recollection, the Gayeties Splendor and Folly of this vain World is. How pleasant it is to your Soul to reflect on what has been done Well, how grievous and bitter the remembrance of past Sins and Folly is, and how intolerable they would be, had you not comfortable hopes of the Truth and Sincerity of your Repentance, and of the acceptance of it, thro' the Infinite Mercys of God in a Crucified Jesus. Do this while you are well, that you may do it with more Comfort to yourselves and more Benefit to others when your last Sickness comes. The Words of dying and Pious Friends, are apt to leave strong and lasting Impressions, and you yourselves

selves will see the greater Reason to adore the Divine Goodness, that you were not cut off in the Act, and full career of sinning; but had the Grace given you to avoid the dangerous Temptation of deferring your Care of the main Concern, and leaving your Happiness to the great uncertainty of a Death-bed Repentance. You will find Work enough to exercise your Thankfulness, Humility, Meekness, Patience and Resignation to the Divine Will: and to lift up your trembling Soul in fervent Prayer to God, to continue to you the due exercise of all Christian Graces, that will thro' his Infinite Mercy qualify you for the Pardon of your Sins, and the Divine Favour and so make your latter End comfortable in the hopes and well grounded Expectations of your happy share in the blisful Enjoyments of a glorious Eternity, thro' the Merits of Christ. Towards the furtherance of which I recommend to your use these following Prayers, and heartily pray that all of us may so live and dye that thro' the unspeakable Mercys of God in Jesus Christ we may meet in a State of Eternal Happiness, for ever to Praise and Glorify our Good and Merciful Creator and Redeemer.

A Prayer to be added to your daily Devotion, which with a small Alteration is taken out of Bishop *Taylor's* great Exemplar.

O Eternal and Holy Jesus, who by Death hast overcome Death, and by thy Passion taken out it's sting, and made it become one of the Gates hast Heaven, and an entrance to Happiness, to Blessed be thy Glorious Name that I have hitherto escaped the surprises of it, and that thro' thy goodness I am made sensible of my Duty of preparing for it. Preserve me in Mercy from those dangers that may hasten it, and from the committing any Sins, which may bring it as a judgment on me. Have Mercy on me now, and especially at that Gasty minute. Let thy Grace prevent, direct and

and Assist me all the Days of my short Pilgrimage, here, that I may by a Devout, Righteous and Charitable behaviour wait chearfully for the coming of my Lord, and be ready to Obey thy Voice at what ever Hour thou shalt call. Lord in thy infinite Compassion to a Poor frail Creature let me not be in any manner unprovided, nor (if it be thy Divine Will) let my departure be hasty, but after the usual manner of Men : That nothing may be Remarkable in it but my Repentance, Humility, Patience, Resignation and a Manifestation of thy great and wonderful mercy. Grant me to the last the Happy enjoyment of my Senses and understanding, and that I may Die the Death of the Righteous ; having first discharg'd all my Obligations of Justice, leaving none thro' my fault or neglect Miserable or unprovided at my departure, that have any Dependance on me, or of whom I can take care. But ever be thou the Portion of my Friends and Relations, and let thy Blessings both Spiritual and Temporal accompany them till we shall meet in the Bosom of our Lord. Preserve me ever in the peace and Communion of the Church, and bless my Bed of Sickness, or Death with the good Directions and Pray'rs of a Spiritual guide, with an Happy partaking of the Holy Sacrament, with patient Submission, and casting of all care upon thee, with a Firm faith and well Grounded hope, with just Measures of Repitance, and a sincere Love to thee my God, and all Mankind, with assistance and guard of Angels that with safety and joy my Soul may be committed into the Hands of my faithful Creator, and at the Revelation of the great Day be received into the joy of my Lord. Grant this O Holy, and most Merciful Jesus Amen.

A Prayer in the time of Sicknefs.

Most wise and gracious Father of Mercys and the God of all true comfort ! Look down in Mercy and Compassion on me thy Poor Creature under thy afflicting Hand. Blessed be thy Glorious Name that my distemper was not so Violent and surprizing as to deprive me of my Senses and Reason, but that I have opportunity allow'd me to recollect thy former Goodness to-
wards

wards me, and my own unworthiness: the thoughts of both which lead me in all Humility of Soul to kiss this kind Rod; and to offer my sincere thanks for this thy Fatherly Chastisement, in that thou hast not in some more severe Instances of Displeasure to enter into Judgment with me. Give me O Lord, a true and Lively sense of thy Goodness and Patience, and of my own Transgressions, that thankfulness for the one and shame and Sorrow for the other may lead me to a sincere Repentance, and Holy purposes of Reformation, in such a manner as may be Acceptable to thee and Comfortable to my Soul. That I may have a true Understanding of the Gospel Covenant; and the Conditions that attend it, that I may have Grace and Strength to improve the remaining Moments of my Life to thy Glory, and the furtherance of my own Salvation. That as the Misemploying of an Healthful state justly Provok'd thee to lay thy Afflicting Hand on me (which I yet Humbly hope is design'd in Mercy to my Poor Soul) so grant that I may make such an improvement of it, as that thy Gracious purposes may be answer'd, and my Repentance meet with a favourable acceptance thro' the Merits and intercession of my Blessed Saviour. That I may impartially search and try my ways and turn sincerely to the Lord. That all the frail, infirmitys and imperfections of my past Life may be pitied, and with them all my grosser deliberate and willful Sins pardon'd. Keep me by thy help and Goodness from the Temptations of that Subtle and Violent Adversary of Men, from the prevailing Corruptions of my own Nature, and from the Tempting baits of this deceitful world. Grant me the Gracious assistance of thy Holy Spirit now, which I fear I have too coldly ask'd in the time of Health. Forgive in thy Boundless Goodness my small improvement under all the means of Grace, and those Opportunities thou hast plentifully afforded me towards the furtherance of my Everlasting Happyness; and refresh my Memory of them so as may administer matter of instruction and Comfort to my Poor Soul. I humbly submit my self to thy Divine will, dispose of me, as thou in thy Divine Wisdom knows to be best for me. Put into my Heart good thoughts and good desires, and enable me to bring them to good Effect.

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Deliver me from all evil Suggestions that lead to to Presumption or despair. Lift up the Light of thy Countenance upon me, speak comfort to my Soul, and make me Hear of Joy and Gladness. Grant that in Life or Death I may Glorify thy Holy Name, be preserv'd in thy fear and Love, and when ever I depart hence, I may die in thy favour and thro' the Merits and Intercession of my Lord Jesus, be receiv'd into thine Everlasting Kingdom. Amen O most merciful Father. Amen.

Immediately before you Receive what has been Prescrib'd by your Physitian, you may use this Prayer.

O Gracious God who in thy infinite Goodnes, hast given us Medicines for the Cure of our diseases and appointed us to use them; Grant a Blessing to this I am about to receive (that if thou see'st fit in thy Divine Wisdom) it may have an Effectual operation to that end. The smallest means thro' thy Divine Blessing have been successful in the greatest difficultys. Thy Power is allways the same and if it maybe to thy Glory, and my good, grant that what I am now about to take may have such success, that I may be restored to a state of Health to Celebrate thy praise, and to Publish to the World thy Mercy towards thy unworthy Creature. Grant this I Pray with an humble Submission to thy Divine Will, O Merciful God for the sake and Merits of Jesus Christ my Lord and only Saviour. Amen.

A Prayer before receiving the Sacrament.

O God I humbly adore thy Glorious Majesty, that in this thy Fatherly Vistation thou hast Mercifully continued to me the use of my senses and understanding, and bless'd my Sick Bed with suitable assistances and directions of my Spiritual Guide: and that I am now thro' thy unspeakable goodness to my poor Soul about to partake of the Holy Sacrament, which our gracious Lord instituted in memory of his great Mercy to Mankind, in undergoing an Ignominious Death to deliver his faithful Ser-

wants from Eternal Death. Grant me the especial assistance of thy grace that the disposition of my mind may be such, as to be humbly sensible of my own sinfulness and unworthiness, and of thy tender Love to Penitent sinners; of the prevalent Merits of my Saviours bitter Passion, and of the Virtue and Efficacy of this Holy Ordinance to all that come to it with penitent Hearts, and steadfast Faith. Let me have a true taste of thy goodness, let it be a defence to me against all Temptation, and Spiritual dangers, a comfort to me in all my Afflicting Agonys, a Gracious Seal of thy Pardon and Reconciliation, and the Happy Pledge of my Salvation; that I may to the last Moment of my Life retain a Comfortable relish of it, that it may Strengthen my Faith, confirm my hope, and continue in me an entire love to thee my God till I come to partake of the fruit of my Saviours Merits and all prevailing intercession, which he has Purchas'd by his suffering. Grant this O! Heavenly Father for the sake of my Crucified Lord Jesus Christ. Amen,

A Prayer after recovery from Sickness.

O Holy and most Merciful God I adore thy Eternal Majesty, and admire thy Infinite Goodness, that in compassion to my Poor Soul, thou hast deliver'd me from the Jaws of Death, and rais'd me from my Bed of Sickness with Joyful lips to praise thy Holy Name, thou didst correct me in Mercy but didst not give me over to Death. And now thou hast made me whole again, restrain me by thy Grace from Sinning any more least a worse thing Happen to me. Grant that this thy kind reprove may not make me careless and secure, but that I may wait for my Lords coming; and improve thy Patience and Long suffering to the serious Purposes of working out my Salvation. And that I may employ the Remaining portion of my Days to that Happy end. That a due sense of thy Goodness may raise in my Soul a perfect Love of thee, and that Love may be manifested by my Obedience to all thy Commands. That all those good Resolutions I have made may be carefully Observ'd by me, that I may have Power and strength to reject all the

the allurements of sin and Satan: And be kept in an Humble frame of mind, and faithful Obedience to thy Holy Laws, till finally thro' thy Mercy in our Lord Jesus Christ thou shalt be pleas'd to bring me to thine Everlasting Kingdom. Amen.

A Prayer when there appears small hopes of recovery.

O Eternal and most Glorious God look down in Mercy and Compassion on thy Poor Creature now drawing toward my dissolution: in thy Boundless Mercy pardon all my Sins, and Transgressions, which yet I dare not ask but thro' the Merits of my Gracious Redeemer, who by his precious Blood has made satisfaction to thy Divine Justice, and procured thy reconciliation to all penitent Believers with that Holy Blood I humbly Pray wach, and purify my Soul from all the Shames and Pollutions it has contracted in this evil World, that it may be presented to thee pure and Spotless. Keep me from the evil insinuations of Satan, and make my Passage easy. Strengthen my faith, confirm my hope, and fix my Thoughts entirely on thy Love and Mercy. That as my End approaches my Soul may more earnestly long and breath after the Glories and ravishing enjoyments of an Eternal state. That I may passionately desire to live and be with thee in a condition wherein I shall never more offend thee, but do always thy will and feel Unspeakable joys, being ever more Employ'd in singing praises and Hallelujahs, and whatever else is the business of that Glorious state with Angels and just Souls made perfect. Keep me prepared with such a frame of mind, and call for me when thou pleasest, Oh thou blessed Father! oh thou righteous Redeemer! Oh thou gracious Comforter, to which three Persons our one Glorious Eternal God be rendred as is most due by Angels and Men, all Honour, Adoration, Glory, Praise and Thanksgiving World without end Amen.



FINIS.